

## Gender Differences in Adjustment to Loss and Grief among Selected Kenyan Orphaned Secondary School Students

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### Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate Gender differences in adjustment to Loss and Grief among orphaned Kenyan secondary school students. The study was informed by Kübler-Ross Cycle model of loss and grief. Mixed method research approach was used and with it, concurrent triangulation design was adopted. The target population consisted of 47 schools, 20 focus group discussion students, 10 personal interviews and 1,245 Form 3 orphaned students from public secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County. A sample size of 453 students from 15 secondary schools were sampled for the study using stratified random sampling technique. Reliability of the instruments was ascertained through a pilot study of 9% of the population that did not participate in the final study. Internal consistency was also used to determine the reliability of questionnaires and coefficient values of  $r=0.784$ , was reported. Face validity of the instruments was ascertained by pilot testing the questionnaires and also by seeking expert judgment by university lecturers. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic framework. Trustworthiness of qualitative data was ensured by analyzing the framework as fronted by Lincoln & Guba. The study findings revealed that there were no statistically significant gender difference on adjustment to loss and grief. The study recommended that schools should introduce adapting-parenting model among teachers to take care of the orphaned students.

**Keywords:** Gender differences; adjustment; Loss and Grief; orphans; secondary school; students

### 1. Introduction

Orphanhood due to loss of parents disposes adolescents to adjustment to loss and grief crises as they trudge through progression factors. Since adolescence primarily is a time of internal turmoil, any additional turbulence may throw adolescents off balance of physical, emotional, social and cognitive maneuver of progression changes. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, death of parents has been the other crisis for adolescents. Socio-economic, cultural and emerging trends have created a paradigm shift that grieving adolescents seldom have someone to fall back to (Scharf & Shulman, 2010). Most adolescents are struggling with loss and grief as schools have become academic-mean oriented and psychosocial support has been relegated to 'silence'. Unfortunately, the adolescent is still suffering under the weight of progression factors and grief. It therefore became pertinent that, more adolescents that are already battling with developmental crisis found themselves adjusting to loss and grief as well. The situation that was overwhelming showed that chances were high that adjusting to loss and grief of this nature could throw a student off balance (Okello, 2008). Therefore, the present study sought to bridge the gap by finding out possible strategies for adjusting to loss and grief among adolescent orphans.

A matron at a Kisumu Central Sub-County school, Kenya reported that twelve students who lost parents were unable to sleep for a period of time (Doughty, Pfefferbaum, Pfefferbaum, Dumont, Pynoos, Gurwitsch & Ndeti, 2006). The matron got to know when other peculiar tendencies like over clinging, insecurity, avoiding taking a bath and throwing

tantrums were observed, that was also alluded to by (Biener & Siegel, 2006). Another school's report in Kisumu Central Sub-County, indicated that a student who had been performing well dropped significantly after the father's death as explained by (Muchai, Ngari & Mumiukha, 2014) in their pilot study. Foa, (2011) also explained that prolonged exposure to loss and grief may lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which the present study suggests may interfere with progression factors. The same adolescents who are orphaned are also expected by the society to understand and excel in what they are doing thereby acting as solace to bereaved adult parents as a societal expectation as explained by (Owuor & Mauta, 2011). Oblivious of the fact that these same adolescents are undergoing progression factors that are a crisis on its own, adolescents are left to manage their pain on their own. It leaves them with 'unfinished business'-physically, socially, emotionally, and even cognitively as noted by (Forbes, Phillips, Ryan & Dahl, 2011). From an adolescents' point of view, loss of a parent, guardian or significant other is catastrophic especially if the deceased was their bread earner or worse still a role model. Adolescents would then ask themselves several unanswered questions which turn into rhetorics in their inside world as explained by (Grbac, 2008: Leek, 2011).

Kisumu Central Sub-County of Kenya has 59 operational homes for orphans who can be traced to respective schools in the Central Sub-County (Victory Churches International, 2011). A total of 4,234 recorded orphans are sponsored and integrated into schools within the Municipality. According to Kisumu Sub-County Education Office, (2013), 2,841 semi and total orphans are sponsored in secondary schools by different church organizations and orphan homes around Kisumu County. Kisumu Children Trust, (2014) was one such orphan home that began in 1994, and presently houses more than 150 orphans while a total of 2,000 orphans that are school going, have passed through the same orphanage. Global Giving Foundation, (2012), was the other project that runs the only non-formal center in the slums of Manyatta- Kisumu. These orphans adjust to loss and grief. However, it was not clear how progression factors influenced their adjustment to loss and grief. Thus, the study investigated Gender differences in adjustment to Loss and Grief among orphaned Kenyan secondary school students.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The present study was informed by the Kübler-Ross Cycle model of loss and grief as cited by Freeman, (2005) and Worden, (2005). The model, developed by Kübler-Ross (1969) originally explained the experience of those dying from terminal illness. Presently, it has been widely used to explain the process and subsequent adjustment to grief more broadly (Bonanno, 2006).

The grief cycle model was a useful perspective for understanding personal and other people's emotional reactions to personal trauma and change, irrespective of the cause. From Kübler-Ross (1969) model's perspective, adjusting to grief was not a linear process, it was considered to be fluid and as a result was believed that most people did not progress through the stages of the model in an orderly manner as indicated in (Shear, 2005). Kübler-Ross, (1969) Cycle model, that was commonly referred to as the five stages of grief was a concept which argued that someone faced with the reality of impending death or an extreme, awful fatal experience, mostly processed a series of emotional stages (Worden, 2005). The model therefore had five distinct stages that an individual suffering from loss and grief was believed to pass through: *Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance* (Freeman, 2005). This theory informed the present study as it helped explain adjustment steps among students to loss and grief.

### 2.2 Literature Review

Gender disparities refer to the average group differences between males and females and are presumably based on sexually same sexes' biological adaptations. These group differences are assumed to be because of differences in socialization (Trofimova, 2012). In a study by Aloka & Bujuwoye (2013), an investigation on gender differences in decisions on student disciplinary behaviours by selected Kenyan secondary school disciplinary panels. The results revealed gender differences in decision making behaviours by members of Kenyan secondary school disciplinary panels, gender differences in the perceptions of students presenting with disciplinary behaviours and differences between single-sex schools and coeducational schools was evident. However, the study failed to indicate gender differences in behavior expectations of students depending on categories of schools. The strength of the study was its holistic study method that would cover both quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaire and interview protocol. It mirrored a firm base of concrete and empirical study. In contrast, the study eclipsed the fundamental facts of gender disparities; their biological backgrounds and gender roles as well as personal underlying factors that could be unknown to the researcher as they

made decisions. The present study viewed this as a factor that would generate glaring gender differences. The present study therefore, filled the gap by finding out the gender disparities in adjusting to loss and grief as a personal underlying factor for an adolescent.

Adams, (2012) conducted an in-depth analysis of families who had experienced the death of a young child and what happened to the family dynamics after that tragic loss in Alabama Crescent Academy. The findings of the study indicated that unlike stereotypes, not all men grieve their losses and are less dramatic. The study also revealed that, most participants thought women bore the greatest brand of grief and that a lot of them sought postloss therapy. It also revealed that unlike the general notion that women grieve more because they are women, the study responded differently. Also most of the participants do not draw a distinction between death of spouse or child. The results therefore indicated that there was no clear relationship between intensity and or length of grief to gender differences. Conversely, the study revealed that, not all men grieve their loss, women were perceived to bear the greatest brand in the loss of a child, and they sought therapy after loss significantly, just like women do not grieve more because they are women. The literature gap filled by the present study was that respondents were and their response noted on adjustment to loss and grief.

Similarly, Beneria & Permanyer, (2010) also conducted an in-depth analysis on 43 participants (21 males and 22 female) at a Monrovia college fair. The study findings revealed that, death was their main fear across the gender divide. The study also noted that men would rather not talk about grief while women thought otherwise. As far as men were concerned, talking about the deceased would not help the situation, while women thought it did. Women felt it was a bad thing for men not to talk about their loss, while women saw it as a good thing. There was a direct opposite in reaction to whether there was luck in being employed as at the time of grief: the males were undecided while the female thought it was wrong. Moreover, any male who was emotional about a loss was viewed as weak by fellow men in this study while the women were midway. Males thought it was good to let go of one that was either old or had been suffering, while the women do not think so. In contrast, the reviewed study was purely qualitative, based on an in-depth analysis of grieving relations and it lacked quantitative findings. The present study employed a mixed methods research where both quantitative and qualitative data yielded hybrid results, thereby filling the gap in literature on gender disparities in adjustment to loss and grief.

Doka, & Martin, (2010) studied the most common beliefs about the people of Yoruba, where two variables were tested on 135 adolescents (71 males and 64 females) in relation to gender in grieving, a set of items were tagged to death and gender became the interplay. The results showed that death was grieved according to social constructs. The findings showed that males grieved deeply and for a long time when they lost money, property, a good job, security, food but recovered pretty fast when they lost a relationship, an attachment, change of station, or any form of adjustment. Females on the other hand grieved more to adjustments, betrayal, infidelity, attachments, affection, and loss of adored or personalized items like pens, earrings, chains and porcelain. The study findings revealed that males were solitary and engaged in excessive withdrawal as they grieve while females connected with others, joined support groups, sought the care of a supportive community of family and friends, talked to a clergyperson, or even made an appointment with a mental health professional should the need arise. The respondents also said that males were careful to mourn privately while females had no trouble mourning in public. The study was based on qualitative data only whereas the present study filled the gap in literature by using mixed methods where both qualitative and quantitative findings yielded hybrid results.

Tuttle, (2012) conducted a survey on gender influence on adults adjusting to secondary blindness among 117 respondents at the Chicago eye care center. The study aimed at finding out the gender patterns in adjustment to clinical and secondary blindness among patients that attended Chicago eye clinic. The study findings revealed that more men 31% are born clinically blind than women that stood at 18%. The study also established that (41%) of the men took much longer to adjust to secondary blindness than clinical blindness. The women on the other had a (07%) took time to adjust to secondary blindness. The study therefore concluded that women adjust faster to stressors than men in the same community. The study however sampled adults attending eye clinic in Chicago while the present study filled literature gap by collecting data from adolescents in Kenyan public secondary schools.

Kinyua, (2014) conducted quantitative research with 113 families in Yatta, Kenya to ascertain socio-cultural factors that inhibits entrepreneurship in Kenya. The study listed five possible socio-cultural factors that may hinder entrepreneurship as land ownership, socio-economic status, age, gender and position in the society. A total of 53% of the respondents said gender was the greatest hindrance, followed by land ownership at 21%, socio-economic status at and position in society at 9% and age at 8%. The findings revealed that gender bias, stereotypes and cultural norms and regulations hindered economic development. The study therefore concluded that gender was the top most socio-cultural factor that inhibited entrepreneurship in Kenya. The reviewed literature however used quantitative method to collect data and not mixed methods, while the present study filled the gap in literature by using mixed methods to collect data on

gender disparities in adjustment to loss.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

The Concurrent Triangulation design helped in obtaining different but complementary data on the same topic, helping to best understand the research problem which eventually aided in bringing together differing strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods (large sample size, trends, generalization) with those of qualitative methods (small sample, details, in-depth). The researcher adopted this design for this study because there was need to estimate quantitatively how the selected variables could influence adjustment to loss and grief. In addition, the qualitative aspect was adopted to explore the participant experiences and feelings on strategies for adjustment to loss and grief.

#### 3.2 Study Participants

Target population for the present study comprised of 1245 form three partially or totally orphaned students in public secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County. Target population for the present study comprised of 1245 form three partially or totally orphaned students in public secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County. A sample size of 453 secondary school students from 15 schools were selected to participate in this study using stratified random sampling technique. The sample size of 453 students for quantitative sample was considered appropriate since according to Bragg, (2011) who noted that one third of a population was an adequate sample, whose information can be deduced for the general population. A sample of 10 partial or total orphaned students were selected from the sampled schools for interviews using purposive sampling technique. According to Lucas (2013), purposive sampling technique is primarily used in qualitative studies was defined as selecting units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions.

#### 3.3 Research Instruments

The Adjustment to Loss and Grief Questionnaire was used to collect data. The aim of this questionnaire was to gather relevant information regarding the ways in which students adjusted to loss and grief. The questionnaire contained 23 statements with options on a likert scale on how respondents would behave in different scenarios in the presence of loss. The questionnaire had 23 items which sought to establish the extent to which adolescent respondents spontaneously responded in relation to loss. The questionnaire requested participants to respond in the way that they know best to the way they would adjust to loss and grief. The response format was made in a 5-point likert scale: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. In depth-interviewing was employed in the present study because it enabled the researcher to understand and interpret social reality through meanings that the respondents attached to their career experiences (Punch, 2010).

To ascertain the usability of the instrument, the researcher adopted expert judgment that was lecturers of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology from the department of Education psychology for verification and feedback during seminar presentations. In the present study the internal consistency of the instruments was obtained by computing Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) using SPSS Version 20. Averages of all possible 'split-half' correlation coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items were computed. The researcher also computed the reliability for multi-item opinion questions. The items were tested using Cronbach alpha and it gave an overall reliability of 0.788. The result was an indication that the present internal consistency which was above the recommended reliability of 0.6;  $\alpha > 0.6$  indicated satisfactory internal consistency reliability for the multi item opinion questions.

#### 3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher proceeded to collect data from selected respondents after receiving permission from Board of Post Graduate Studies of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST), National Council for Science and Technology Innovation (NACOSTI), sampled schools and participants. The researcher then did the following: developed questionnaires, conducted interview schedule for data collection, secured an authorization before embarking on study. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires from 345 students while qualitative data was collected using 10 personal interviews. Focus group discussions were conducted with 20 semi and total orphans to collect qualitative data.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data obtained from questionnaires was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Statistical tests such as independent sample tests was used to analyze data. Qualitative data was analyzed using the thematic framework.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

The study investigated how gender differences affected adolescents' adjustment to loss and grief among orphaned Kenyan secondary school students. Nonetheless, to establish whether there was a statistically significant difference in adjustment to loss and grief between boys and girls, the researcher had to test the hypothesis that: 'There is no statistically significant gender difference on adjustment to loss and grief among orphaned secondary school students in Kisumu Central Sub-County'. The results of descriptive statistics are presented on Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1.** Descriptive statistics on gender variance

| Group statistics |        |    |         |                |                 |
|------------------|--------|----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
|                  | Gender | N  | Mean    | Std. Deviation | Std. Error mean |
| Score            | Female | 63 | 50.9176 | 8.86225        | 1.11654         |
|                  | Male   | 78 | 50.4877 | 9.11039        | 1.03155         |

As shown on Table 4.1, the findings were that female orphaned students had a mean of 50.92% score on adjustment to loss and grief, with a standard deviation of 8.86 and standard error of 1.12. The male orphaned students had a mean score of 50.49% in adjusting to loss and grief, with a standard deviation of 9.11 and standard error of 1.03.

To ascertain that there were statistically significant gender differences among the study respondents, a t-test was carried out as presented on Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2.** Independent samples t-test result

| Independent samples test |                             |   |      |                              |         |                 |                 |                       |                          |         |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------|
|                          |                             | Levene's test for equality of variances |      | T-test for equality of means |         |                 |                 |                       |                          |         |
|                          |                             | F                                       | Sig. | t                            | Df      | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. Error difference | 95% ci of the difference |         |
| Score                    | Equal variances assumed     | .779                                    | .379 | .282                         | 139     | .778            | .42982          | 1.52462               | -2.58462                 | 3.44427 |
|                          | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | .283                         | 134.254 | .778            | .42982          | 1.52012               | -2.57665                 | 3.43630 |

The findings of the study on Table 4.14 established that on average the female and male level of adjustment to loss and grief did not differ significantly (male:  $M=50.92$ ,  $SE=1.12$ ; female:  $m=50.49$ ,  $SE=1.03$ ),  $t(0.282)$  on 139 d.f,  $p = 0.778$ , as indicated in the SPSS output. From the result of this analysis, the researcher did not have statistically sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Hence it was reasonable to conclude that there was no gender difference on adjustment to loss and grief among orphaned secondary school students in Kisumu Central Sub-County. The study by Aloka & Bujuwoye (2013) disagreed with the present study when it revealed gender differences in decision making behaviours by members of Kenyan secondary school disciplinary panels, gender differences in the perceptions of students presenting with disciplinary behaviours and differences between single-sex schools and coeducational schools. However, Adams, (2012) in his study agreed that there was no clear relationship between intensity and or length of grief to gender differences. Beneria & Permanyer, (2010) on the other hand brought a new dimension that gender difference in loss was manifested depending in specific items being focused upon. For instance, women felt it was a bad thing for men not to talk about their loss, while women saw it as a good thing while the savings of the deceased did not cushion the female's pain while the male thought it did. Sebastian, et al, (2008) concurred with Aloka & Bujuwoye (2013) that many human activities show case gender differences physically, emotionally, cognitively, socially and even psychologically.

Findings from qualitative data obtained on gender difference on adjustment to loss and grief from interviews were analyzed by thematic framework. In a gender split, the responses were categorized in to three main categories; there were those that sought therapy and received it, those that sought therapy and were denied and those that never tried at

all. The 11 female respondents of the study reported varied responses to adjustment to loss and grief that was engaging in peer therapy and resorting to silence therapy. Peer therapy refers to support that comes from age mates, workmates or persons for which there is a commonality of factors. Peer therapy occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other (Corey, 2005). It operates within the realms of trained supporters and can take a variety of forms. Three female respondents overtly sought help by trying to share how they felt with someone and these are their excerpts;

*...my friends at school have been my only consolation, there I can talk, laugh and share... [Graceful]*  
*...i found solace in a friend at school who had lost a brother to drowning in the lake and the body had not been found to today... [Adorable]*

These respondents reached out to others to find help. Mostly, they sought support from friends at school which the present study related to peer therapy. A peer is a person who is similar in fundamental ways to the recipient of support and their relationship is one of equality as was alluded to by (Kute, 2007). Peer therapy therefore provided knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other. A study by Owaa, (2010) agreed that adolescents trusted fellow students with their issues more than centers of power in school like the deputy principal or class teacher. Worden, (2005) added that adolescents trust themselves with their issues because they had a commonality of many physical, social, cognitive and economic factors. Okello, (2008) also observed that adolescents solved their problems easier by looking out to another adolescent to talk to, who would listen to him, and give him consolation and hope.

However, another five female respondents sought help either from a parent, guardian, sibling or friend but were denied for various reasons. During the interview, they shared their views as shown in the excerpts;

*... i wish someone trusted me and agreed to talk of my leg... [Nice]*  
*... i try to air this, they think I am very inconsiderate and that I am demanding too much... [Patient]*  
*...i needed someone to talk to... how I wish I would share my pain with someone... [Grateful]*

These are respondents that for one reason or the other were maneuvering adolescence progression factors and also found themselves in situations of loss and grief that needed therapy. The respondents were willing to talk but obstacles such as parenting style, ignorance, socio-cultural norms and taboos acted as constraints that barred them from accessing therapy. Juma, et, al. (2012) agreed that adolescents had the capacity to realize that they need help and seek for it but often the society denies them through culture, religion, education and family ties.

Some female students also resorted to silence therapy. The findings indicated that three female respondents overtly kept their loss and grief to themselves and never sought therapy. They played the facts in their minds and in the true essence of introversion; they made personal plans on how to find solutions to the issues by themselves. The three female adolescents took pleasure in solitary activities which the present study interpreted as self talk clearly depicting the characteristic of an introvert who enjoyed time spent alone and found less reward in time spent with large groups of people. So these characteristics made an adolescent that was an introvert (whether male or female), a loner and a self seeker. The present study interpreted their manifestations as an introvert's thought trails and a process of adjusting to loss and grief as was revealed in their excerpts;

*...grieved, kept to self... [Dependable]*  
*...in a show of respect, I keep quiet... [Joyful]*  
*...I have chosen to keep quiet... [Grateful]*

These were study respondents who did not make any attempt to seek for help from any quarter but self. The present study noted that even in their few numbers, there were females who were introverts that were wholly or predominantly concerned with and interested in their own mental life. Forsman, et, al, (2012) agreed that their energy tended to expand through reflection but drastically dwindled during interactions with others. Sun & Li, (2009) also concurred that scores of adolescents are capable of being at home for holidays and are silent about their term reports (even if they are good) until a parent insists for them to show term reports.

On the other hand, Male students ways of adjustment to loss and grief. The 9 male respondents of the study reported two main responses to adjustment to loss and grief that was seeking peer therapy and resorting to silence therapy. As had been earlier mentioned, peer therapy refers to support that comes from age mates, workmates or persons for which there is a commonality of factors. Peer therapy occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other (Corey, 2005). The present study noted that only two out of the nine male

respondents sought therapy from their friends at school. They were elated to share how fellow students helped them initiate the process of adjustment to loss and grief as they narrated in their excerpts;

*...confided in a classmate for help...[Fortune]*

*...my friend in school is orphaned; she gave me a rude shock when I narrated my story. She said that even the 'hand-only dad' was better than none. She thought I was better off, as in I had a dad which she missed completely. She gave me hope to keep trying, that one day I may be lucky to get the forum I wanted with dad. [Restored]*

These two male respondents underwent peer therapy as a means of adjustment to loss and grief. They were happy as their peers allowed them to see their self worth again. Owaa, (2010) agreed that peers were able to help other peers with their problem situations so as to gain normalcy again. Trofimova, (2012) also noted that adolescents formed secret circles where their issues were better known by fellow peers. He added that adolescents covered for each other even if they were in great danger. But Rossi & Rossi, (2005) differed when he said that adolescents thrived in peer pressure where one was even coerced to join a circle of adolescents and was even threaten if one adolescent chose to act otherwise. He therefore noted peer pressure and not peer therapy.

However, the study also noted that among the male respondents, none of them tried to seek for therapy of any kind and was denied. This was contrary to the female respondents that five respondents sought but failed. Pawlowski & Atwal, (2008) the shy nature of males that they would rather keep issues to themselves rather than trying to find help and get ashamed by being turned down. Beneria & Permanyar, (2010) also observed that male adolescents believe that it was only fair to let go of one that was either old or had been suffering from a terminal illness. The present study added that males found such situations embarrassing and demeaning, that the act of keeping to self was a characteristic prone to male respondents of the present study.

Other male students resorted to silence therapy. Silence is listening to self devoid of unquestionable company around an individual. The present study noted that out of the total 9 male respondents, 7 fell in this category of those who did not attempt to seek therapy at all. It is important to note that much as they were faced with progression factors as adolescents as well as issues of adjustment to loss and grief, they chose to keep silent as they expressed in their excerpts.

*...threats, kept quiet...[Just]*

*...was silent...[Enabler]*

*.....never talks about it...[Faithful]*

*...kept mum...[Respectful]*

*...I don't talk about my brother to anyone...I scream his name...[Measurable]*

The respondents' reflections imply that male adolescents were capable of keeping quiet on issues that weighed them down or even affected their adolescence progression and adjustment to loss and grief. Doka, & Martin, (2010) concurred with the present study that male respondents stored pent up feelings as they did not open up to anyone so they are basically the custodians of the situations that make them uncomfortable and possible source of solution to the same troubling situation. Angela, (2014) agreed that being 'thinkers' and not 'feelers' (like females), males tend to invest in thinking through their stressors with an aim of finding a way round it. Summarily, the present study findings showed that more females sought therapy than males as an effort in adjustment to loss and grief. It revealed that more females were ready to share their grief in peer therapy. Males on the other hand kept their issues to themselves and hoped that it would get better with time. It was worth noting that among the male respondents, those who sought therapy only talked to peers who informed the present study that other avenues of family background had not been able to help adolescents to adjust to loss and grief. Lamb, (2012) concurred that adolescents resorted to forms of deviant behavior when cornered by parents and guardians.

The result showed that gender differences in adjustment to loss and grief manifested when the 11 females and 9 males gave their reflections on how they adjusted to loss and grief.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The study investigated the gender differences in adjustment to loss and grief. Descriptive statistics reported that there was a general slight marked gender difference in student average score in adjustment to loss and grief. However, the inferential statistics indicated that there was no gender difference on adjustment to loss and grief among orphaned secondary school students in Kisumu Central Sub-County. Qualitative findings indicated that male adolescents adjusted

to loss and grief by keeping their issues to themselves and hoped that it would get better with time. Males also employed silence in totality as they hoped time would heal their wounds. The males also distanced themselves from grief items and persons and believed that to grieve was not manly hence they ended up with pent up feelings. Only two sought therapy and only from fellow peers. Female adolescents on the other hand adjusted to loss and grief by seeking therapy as an effort to adjust to loss and grief. More females (eight out of eleven) were ready to share their grief in peer therapy. Only three females kept adjustment issues to themselves as they waited for opportune time to revenge. This means that boys and girls adjust differently to loss and grief.

Based on the findings of the study there are implications: Teacher counsellors should provide appropriate therapy and technique for male and female orphans in school. This is because gender differences call for different ways of therapy for orphaned adolescents' adjustment to loss and grief. Secondly, the Ministry of Education should train special teachers on how to provide therapy to adolescents who need therapy, like those under the influence of progression factors while trying to adjust to loss and grief. This is because professionalism in therapy may help teachers in identifying and conducting therapy so that students can concentrate on the cardinal objective of academic excellence.

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